

SALES PROMOTIONS AND BRAND VISIBILITY: A STUDY OF ELECTRONIC BRANDS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract: Brand recognition plays a pivotal role in the success of electronic stores, particularly in today's competitive and dynamic retail market. As the electronic retail industry continues to evolve with rapid technological advancements and shifting consumer preferences, establishing strong brand recognition is critical for distinguishing a store amidst intense market competition. Sales promotion techniques have gained significant managerial attention for their ability to enhance brand visibility, engage customers, and drive profitability. These strategies, when well-executed, can help electronic stores build brand loyalty, attract new customers, and ultimately increase sales. However, the effectiveness of sales promotions depends on several factors, such as selecting the right promotional strategies, understanding customer preferences, and determining appropriate discount levels. Failure to align promotional efforts with consumer expectations may result in negative brand perception or reduced customer engagement. This paper examines the role of sales promotions in shaping brand recognition within electronic stores and highlights the challenges and strategies involved in leveraging promotions to achieve a competitive edge. The study further emphasizes the need for a careful balance between promotional activities and brand identity, as an overemphasis on discounts or poorly executed campaigns may undermine the long-term value of brand recognition. The findings suggest that electronic stores must strategically design their promotional campaigns to enhance brand recognition while maintaining a consistent and positive brand image.

Keywords: Brand Recognition, Sales Promotion, Electronic Stores, Customer Engagement, Brand Loyalty

Introduction

Brand recognition plays a crucial role in the success of electronic stores in today's competitive market. Establishing a strong brand presence and recognition among consumers is essential for building customer loyalty and driving sales. The growing managerial importance of sales promotion has generated a great deal of research on how sales promotion affects profitability (Loudon & Bitta, 2012; Perreault & McCarthy, 2012; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014). Sales promotion techniques are widely employed by businesses to enhance brand recognition and stimulate customer engagement. Sales promotion techniques offer an avenue for electronic stores to increase their brand visibility, attract new customers, and enhance customer engagement. However, selecting the right promotion strategies, determining optimal discount levels, and designing attractive promotional campaigns require careful

planning and understanding of customer preferences (Schultz, Robinson, & Petrisson, 2018). Failure to execute sales promotion techniques effectively can result in diminished brand perception or even customer disengagement.

Brand recognition refers to the ability of consumers to identify and recognize a particular brand among a set of alternatives. It plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making and is a key aspect of brand awareness. Keller (1993) defines brand recognition as consumer's ability to discriminate the brand as having seen or heard before. Different studies have shown that people usually choose things that are familiar to them (Coates et al., 2006; Hoyer & Brown, 1990; McDonald & Sharp, 2000), people believe that the recognized option is more secure. The electronic retail market is a dynamic and highly competitive business environment characterized by constant technological advancements, changing consumer preferences, and intense market competition (Kanter & Brinkerhoff, 2011). The electronics industry is characterized by frequent product updates and advancements, leading to shorter product lifecycles. As a result, electronic stores have continuously tried to update their product offerings to keep pace with the evolving market demands. Establishing strong brand recognition is crucial for electronic stores to stand out in the crowded market and attract a loyal customer base (Laroche, 2015).

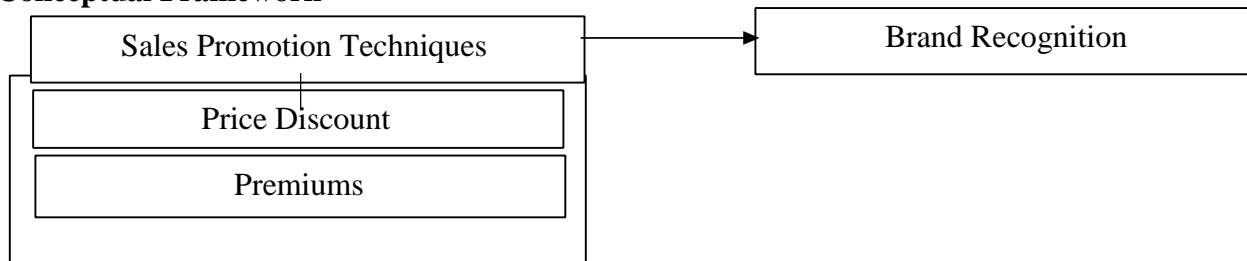
Chen et al. (2014) conducted a study that investigated the impact of sales promotion on brand equity, specifically focusing on the roles of brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. The findings revealed that sales promotion techniques significantly affected brand equity, with brand loyalty and customer satisfaction acting as important mediators. This study highlighted the importance of understanding the underlying mechanisms through which sales promotion techniques influence brand awareness and customer perceptions. In a related study, Chen and Chiu (2016) examined the impact of sales promotion on brand equity and delved into the specific dimensions of brand awareness and brand image. The results indicated that sales promotion techniques positively influenced brand awareness, ultimately contributing to improved brand equity. This research sheds light on the role of sales promotion techniques in shaping consumers' perceptions of brands and emphasized the need for electronic stores to leverage these techniques strategically.

Laroche (2015) found that only 40% of sales promotions are effective but there was no definition of success or effectiveness. Other studies suggest that sales promotions do not have a constant or continued effect on volume of sales of a firm which tend to diminish and come at the initial level at which it was before the sales promotion is being offered (Dekimpe, Hanssens, & Risso, 2019; Pauwels, Dominique, & Siddarth, 2012). Still some researchers argue about the usefulness of sales promotion, that whether it promotes the long-term growth and profitability among brands for which it is projected is not compulsory (Kopalle, Carl, & Marsh, 2019). In contrast, a study conducted by Ailawadi and Neslin (2018) revealed that sales promotions motivate consumers to make immediate purchases and also positively impacts the consumption volume. Going by these, our interest therefore is to add to this line of study by examining the relationship between sales promotion techniques and brand recognition among electronic stores in Port Harcourt.

Statement of the Problem

The electronics industry is seen to be different from other markets (Kay, 2017), Nigeria is seen as the next frontier for electronics after South Africa (Tania, et al, 2017). As quality expectancy increases by the day, people now pay more attention to product brands as more is seen to be spent on quality than before. This has placed the electronics industry under pressure (Moschis & Friend, 2018). In 2019, Ogundipe and Obinna's report in the Vanguard Newspaper indicates that most electronics firms are not successful today because of customer's preference on foreign-made and original brands over locally sourced ones. The report explained how the low performance by brands in the electronics industry in Nigeria is described as a big threat to the survival of the industry. Based on the foregoing, this study examines if there exist any relationship between sales promotion techniques and brand recognition of electronics stores in Rivers State. Perhaps issuing premium products and price discounts can stimulate quick recognition of brands and encourage patronage.

Conceptual Framework



Conceptual Framework showing the Relationship between Sales promotion techniques and Brand recognition of Electronics Stores in Rivers State

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between sales promotion techniques and brand recognition of Electronics Stores in Rivers State. Specific objectives include:

1. To examine the relationship between price discount and brand recognition of Electronics Stores in Rivers State
2. To examine the relationship between premium and brand recognition of Electronics Stores in Rivers State

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between price discount and brand recognition Electronics Stores in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between premium and brand recognition Electronics Stores in Rivers State.

Review of Related Literature Theoretical Foundation: Congruency theory

The basic principle of congruency theory is that changes in evaluation are always in the direction that increases congruity with the existing frame of reference (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 2015). Congruency effects for consumer sales promotions were directly tested and confirmed by Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2010), who showed that: monetary promotions are more effective for utilitarian products as

they provide more utilitarian benefits, which are compatible to those sought from utilitarian products; and non-monetary promotions are more effective for hedonic products as they provide more hedonic benefits, which are compatible to those sought from hedonic products. For example, price cuts are more effective than free gifts for influencing brand choice of laundry detergent (i.e. a utilitarian product), whereas sweepstakes are more effective than price cuts for influencing brand choice of chocolates (i.e. a hedonic product). However, it is noted that there are other factors that may have an impact on the congruency effects, including the product life cycle, purchases situations and consumer demographics.

The Concept of Sales Promotion Techniques

Sales promotion refers to those promotion activities other than advertising, publicity and personal selling that stimulate interest, trial or purchase by final customers or others in the channel (Baohong, 2013). The American Marketing Association (AMA) define sales promotion as those marketing activities other than personal selling, advertising, publicity that stimulate consumer purchasing and dealer effectiveness such as display, shows, exhibitions, demonstrations and various non-recurrent selling efforts not in the ordinary routine. Sales promotion represents those marketing efforts that are supplementary in nature, conducted for a limited period of time and seeks to induce buying (Dawes, 2014).

Sales promotions techniques are comparatively easy to apply and are likely to have abrupt and considerable effect on the volume of sales (Hanssens, Donald, & Richard, 2011). Resultantly, according to Currim and Schneider (2011) the finances of companies regarding the marketing increase constantly. Research conducted by Ailawadi and Scott (2018) had revealed that consumer promotions techniques affect the consumers to purchase larger amount and consume it faster; causing an increase in sales and ultimately profitability. A study conducted by Hanssens, Donald and Richard (2011) depict that the effects of sales promotion on firms' revenue which they call as first line Sales promotions are comparatively easy to apply and are likely to have abrupt and considerable effect on the volume of sales. Previous studies on the effectiveness of consumer sales promotion have focused on monetary sales promotions techniques (Dhar & Hoch, 2016; Hoch, Dreze, & Purk, 2014). However, in practice, both monetary and non-monetary sales promotions techniques are used widely (Tellis, 2018). There are important differences between these two types: monetary promotions (e.g. shelf-price discounts, consumer contest, rebates and price packs) tend to provide fairly immediate rewards to the consumer and they are transactional in character; non-monetary promotions (e.g. sweepstakes, free gifts, premiums and loyalty programmes) tend to involve delayed rewards and are more relationship-based. In assessing the effectiveness of sales promotions, it is necessary look at the various dimensions of sales promotion. This study will adopt price discounts and premiums as dimensions of sales promotion techniques.

Price discounts

Discount is part of a promotional strategy to attract consumers to buy products. Price discount is a price-based sales promotion strategy where customers are offered the same product at a reduced price (Mishra & Mishra, 2011). Price discounts is a common sales promotion technique that is used to

stimulate demand and increase sales. They can be offered in a variety of ways, including coupons, sales flyers, point-of-sale displays, and online promotions (Laroche, 2015). Discount pricing refers to reduction of the initial price of a product or service (Chen et al. 1998), which is effective in increasing sales volume in a short time (Guerreiro et al. 2004). Price discount is a common technique used by business people to attract new customers, to increase sales, and to retain the existing customers. Olivares, Wittkowski, Aspara, Falk & Matilla (2018), studied that firms utilize discounts to build long-term relationships with customers and generate temporary sales boosts for individual services and products. Electronics companies can employ relational price discount strategy profitably which means that they can give discounts to customers initially to attract them as well as to retain them after the expiry of discount.

Premium

Premiums are promotional items; toys, collectables, souvenirs and household products—that are link to a product, and often require box tops, tokens or proofs of purchase to acquire (Laroche, 2015). Premiums are prizes, gifts or other special offers received when a consumer purchases a product. When a company presents a premium, the consumer pays full price for the good or service, as opposed to coupons that grant price reductions or to samples, instead of receiving the actually product. The consumer generally has to pay at least the shipping and handling costs to receive the premium. Premiums are sometimes referred to as prizes, although historically the word "prize" has been used to denote (as opposed to a premium) an item that is packaged with the product (or available from the retailer at the time of purchase) and requires no additional payment over the cost of the product (Kotler & Armstrong 2010).

This is a method of sales promotion in which some items are offered free or at a bargain price to customers in return for buying a specified product. This technique therefore offers a product for free or at a lower price to induce the customers to buy. Mostly, the effective premiums are closely tied to the product or brand being sold (Blanchard, Schewe, Nelson, & Hiam, 2019). In some instances, free samples of the product are offered free to customers in order to enable them try the product. They may be given out at local retail outlets (Ricky, Ebert, & Starke, 2015). It must however be noted that, "premiums" may not work as well as originally hoped, since some customers may switch to a competitor's brand to get the premiums that company is offering.

Brand recognition

Brand recognition refers to the ability of consumers to identify and recognize a particular brand among a set of alternatives. Keller (1993) defines brand recognition as consumer's ability to discriminate the brand as having seen or heard before. Brand recognition is to confirm prior exposure to the brand when the brand is given a cue, choosing an answer in a situation where the correct answer is not known people will choose the option that they recognize from a previous experience over the unrecognized option (Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair & Okumus, 2015) people believe that the recognized option is more secure. According to Aaker (1996) recognition is believed to be more important for the new or niche brands. It plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making and is a key aspect of brand awareness. Keller (1993)

emphasized the significance of brand recognition in his Brand Knowledge Model, highlighting it as a fundamental dimension of brand awareness. He argued that brand recognition serves as an important basis for consumer brand knowledge and influences consumer behaviour.

Price discount and Brand recognition

Brand recognition refers to the ability of the consumers to recall the information from memory at the time of purchase. According to Portor and Claycomb (1997), a well-recognized brand leads to repeat purchases. In case of consumer products, customers rely on recognition when making preferential decisions (Lin, 2013; Thomas & Williams, 2013). Price discounting is a common tool used to provide short-term sales increase by giving consumers the incentive of savings. Della, Bitta, Monroe and McGinnis (1981) are of the opinion that well-known brands help control and stabilize consumers' perception of product quality and more purchase intention was increased, along with the higher discount rates. According to Raghubir and Corfman (1999), consumers usually do not lower their opinion on certain product when it is on sale as long as the price discounting falls within the industry norm, consumers would not question the legitimacy of it or start to question the quality of the product. Ibojo and Ogunsiji (2011) in their research on effect of price discounts as a medium for sales promotion as a tool on product performance, revealed that sales promotion has a positive effect on product performance and sales volume of the organization. Syeda, Zehra and Sadia (2011) in their research on impact of price discounts on organizations' profitability and consumer's perception in Pakistan, it was revealed that price discounts have a positive effect on brand recognition hence increase in organizational profitability. Adeniran, Egwuonwu and Egwuonwu (2016) conducted research on the impact of sales promotions on sales turnover in airlines industry in Nigeria. It was established that sales promotions incentives have a significantly impact on sales turnover in the airlines industry. Osogbo (2014) conducted research on effects of advertising on product adoption, findings revealed that advertising has an effect on product adoption. Thomas and Williams (2013) found that recognition is more than just a cue that affects preferential choice; contrary to some previous studies like Newell and shanks (2004) showing that other cues can have a significant effect on inferential choice instead of recognition. Hung, (2001) concludes that brand recognition can effectively predict purchase behaviour, the higher the opinion consumers hold towards a product, the more purchase possibility there is. Consumers with higher brand recognition tend to rely on product quality to make a purchase evaluation and are less influenced by pricing or price discounting. Their opinion is also less easily influenced by price discounting because they are considering the product itself, with or without a price discount (Hung, 2001). Those with lower product knowledge usually have lower understanding and confidence in product quality. Consequently, they will rely on pricing to make a purchase decision, which may cause them to have a negative reaction toward price discounting.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between price discount and brand recognition Electronics Stores in Rivers State.

Premium and Brand recognition

Brand recognition is the knowledge about the particular products a company offers especially compared to those offered by its competitors. According to Heilman, Lakishyk, & Radas, (2011) premium sample is very effective in inducing trial, especially among lower educated consumers. For consumers who are planning to buy the product in the promoted category, premium samples can encourage switching from the planned to the promoted brand. For consumers who do not have such previous plans, premium samples can draw them and encourage purchase. Amusat and Ajiboye (2013) conducted research on sales promotion as an antecedent of brand awareness. Simple random sampling was used to select a sample of 80 respondents. It was revealed that sales promotion activities such as bonus, free samples, price promotion and trade shows affect brand awareness. Bamiduro (2001) conducted research on an analysis of trade sponsorships on customer patronage in the beverage industry in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc. It was revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between trade sponsorships as a dimension of sales promotion and customer patronage of the beverage industry. However, according to a study done by Srini, Srinivasan and Anderson (2000) on concepts and strategy guidelines for designing value enhancing sales promotions. Findings revealed that sales promotion dimensions do not change the structure of sales volume over the long run.

Salelaw and Amanpreet (2016) study indicated that monetary and non-monetary sales promotion have a synergetic effect and sales promotion is the driver/ antecedent on the creation of brand recognition. Specifically, consumers' perceptions of an electronic brand's monetary sales promotion have a positive effect on brand awareness and consumer's perception of nonmonetary sales promotion has a positive effect on the creation of a good brand name (brand awareness) and a negative effect on the formulation of brand perceived quality.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between premium and brand recognition Electronics Stores in Rivers State.

Methodology

This study employed the survey method of research, which investigates the behaviour or opinion of a group of people by questioning them (Anyanwu, 2000). The target population in the study was management staff of One Hundred and Ninety-Seven (197) electronic stores in Rivers State as listed in the Google Map Directory. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamen sample size determination techniques at 0.05 level of significant as shown below: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ and we have 132. Using convenience sampling procedure to select the respondents, thirty-six (36) electronics stores was simple randomly selected and 3 copies of questionnaire were given to each firm making it one hundred and eight (108) copies distributed to only management staff. The questionnaire was structured using a five-point likert scale from SA=Strongly Agree (5), A=Agree (4), U=Undecided (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1). Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used to test if the independent variable and its dimensions are associated with the dependent variable.

ANALYSIS; Test of Hypotheses

In this section, results of the study are presented. The null hypothesis being verified states that dependent variable (brand recognition) is not significantly influenced by the independent variable (sales promotion technique). This hypothesis is tested at 5% significance level. The study confirmed the reliability of data before presenting the results of the test of hypotheses.

Table 1. Test for Correlation between Price discounts and Brand recognition

			Price discounts	Brand recognition
Spearman's rho	Price discounts	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.825**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	122	122
	Brand recognition	Correlation Coefficient	.825**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	122	122

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a significant relationship between price discounts and brand recognition. The results indicates that price discounts are significantly associated with brand recognition (where $\rho = .825$ and $P < 0.05$). The finding suggests that price discounts is a significant predictor of brand recognition. Hence on the basis of the result, the hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected.

Table 2. Test for Correlation between Premium and Brand recognition

			Premium	Brand recognition
Spearman's rho	Premium	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.718**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	122	122
	Brand recognition	Correlation Coefficient	.718**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	122	122

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result as depicted in table 2 revealed that there is a significant relationship between Premium and brand recognition. The results indicates that Premium is significantly associated with brand recognition (where $\rho = .718$ and $P < 0.05$). The finding suggests that Premium is a significant predictor of brand recognition. Hence on the basis of the result, the hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The results, as evidenced in the correlation analysis, show that price discounts have a substantial impact on brand recognition of electronics stores in Rivers State. This suggests that price discounts play a vital role in enhancing consumers' ability to remember and recognize a brand, which are fundamental

components of business success. Consequently, the null hypotheses (H_{01}) are rejected, underscoring that there is indeed a meaningful association between price discounts and brand recognition. The findings align with previous research such as, Ibojo and Ogunsiji (2011), Syeda, Zehra, and Sadia (2011), Adeniran, Egwuonwu, and Egwuonwu (2016), and Osogbo (2014), all provide empirical support for the idea that sales promotional techniques, including price discounts, have a positive impact on various aspects of product performance, sales volume, brand awareness, and even organizational profitability. These corroborative studies lend weight to the present research, strengthening the argument that price discounts are an effective tool for enhancing brand recognition in the electronics industry in Rivers State. This synergy of findings not only advances our understanding of marketing dynamics but also offers valuable insights for businesses aiming to leverage sales promotions to bolster their brand recognition in competitive markets.

The findings also show a significant relationship between premium products and brand recognition of electronic stores in Rivers State. The study hypotheses tested results shows an association between premium as a sales promotion technique and brand recognition, hence we rejected the null hypothesis (H_{02}), indicating that premium is indeed significantly associated with brand recognition. This implies that offering premium products or services in electronic stores can contribute positively to the recognition of the brand by consumers. This finding aligns with prior research conducted by Amusat and Ajiboye (2013) and Bamiduro (2001) in the context of sales promotion and brand recognition. While their studies focused on different aspects of sales promotion, they both identified a positive relationship between sales promotion activities and brand recognition, consistent with the notion that strategic efforts to enhance product quality and offer premium products can positively influence brand recognition.

In contrast, the study by Srini, Srinivasan, and Anderson (2000) provides a counterpoint by emphasizing that sales promotion dimensions may not necessarily change the long-term structure of sales volume. However, it's important to recognize that the current research specifically targets the relationship between premium offerings and brand recognition, which may differ from broader sales promotional techniques. Therefore, the findings in this study offer valuable insights into the specific context of electronic stores in Rivers State, emphasizing the significance of premium products and offerings as key drivers of brand recognition.

Conclusion

The study's findings indicate that the dimensions of sales promotion techniques has an implicit relationship with brand recognition. Based on the empirical tests carried out and the discussion of findings, this paper asserts that sales promotion techniques is an antecedent for improved brand recognition of electronic goods. The study demonstrates that sales promotion techniques are ways electronic stores in Rivers State can increase their brand visibility, attract new customers, and enhance customer engagement. Managers of electronic stores in Rivers State are to make their brands easily recognized and valued enough to meet the demands of the existing customers, retain the prevailing customers as well as appeal to new customers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Electronic stores managers should focus predominantly on sales promotion techniques like price discount and premium to ensure that their product brands are easily recognized patronage to enhance customer patronage.
2. The firms should maintain their visibility by making their brands recognisable, trustworthy, and attractive and by providing quality services to their potential customers.
3. Finally, in order to enhance brand recognition in firms, managers of electronic stores in Rivers State should design sales promotional techniques that are capable of enhancing positive customer patronage.

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